

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 – 4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (currently amended): The device described in Claim 4 further comprising: A device for use with a camera for creating a digital mask of a scene for discriminating between an object and a background, said camera having a lens with an iris and a principal axis, said iris having an iris diameter, said device comprising:

a reflection box; and
a light trap;
a beam-splitter mounted in said reflection box;
a light source for projecting a light beam onto said beam-splitter;
a light-source aperture deployed between said light source and said beam-splitter;
an adjustable mount for adjusting a position of said light source relative to said beam-splitter in any of three mutually perpendicular directions;

wherein said reflection box has a front face and a rear face, said front face having a front upper edge and a front lower edge and said rear face having a rear upper edge and a rear lower edge, wherein said beam-splitter is planar and is mounted in said reflection box so as to extend substantially between said front upper edge and said rear lower edge,

wherein said light trap is a substantially planar, rigid element, having a front trap edge, a rear trap edge, and two trap side edges, wherein said front trap edge is affixed to said front upper edge, and said rear trap edge is raised above said rear upper edge; and

wherein said camera is mountable on said reflection box such that said principal axis passes through said beam-splitter, with said light beam from said light source incident on said beam-splitter at an angle of 90° to said principal axis.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The device described in Claim 5, wherein said reflection box has a mounting ring on said rear face, said mounting ring being adaptable to said lens for attaching mounting said camera to said device reflection box.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The device described in ~~Claim 6~~ Claim 5, wherein said light source is ~~at the end of~~ provided by a fiber optics cable running from ~~that is~~ connected to an external light generator to a point internal to said apparatus, beneath said beam splitter.

Claim 8 (original): The device described in Claim 7 also containing an internal light generator energizable through an electric cable connected to said device.

Claim 9 (original): The device described in Claim 7, wherein said light source is a strobe light triggerable in synchrony with a shutter release on said camera.

Claim 10 (original): The device described in ~~Claim 6~~ Claim 5, wherein said mutually perpendicular directions are along an X-axis, a Y-axis, and a Z-axis, respectively, said Z-axis being parallel to said direction of said light beam and said X-axis being parallel to, said principal axis.

Claim 11 (canceled)

Claim 12 (currently amended): The device described in ~~Claim 11~~ Claim 10, wherein ~~movement of~~ said light source is positionable by said adjustment means along said X-

axis and/or said Y-axis to align parallel to said X-axis and to said Y-axis can cause said virtual light source to become coaxial coaxially with said iris.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The device described in ~~Claim 12~~ Claim 10, wherein movement of said light source is positionable by said adjustment means along said Z-axis to effect a virtual diameter of parallel to Z-axis can cause said virtual light source to take on a virtual diameter that is no greater than said iris diameter.

Claim 14 (currently amended): Apparatus for creating a digital mask of an object for discriminating, in a digital photograph, between said object and a background of said object, said apparatus comprising:

- a digital camera;
- a device according to ~~Claim 4~~ Claim 5;
- a support for said object; and
- a sweep;

wherein said apparatus is mounted on said camera, wherein said support for said object is a substantially horizontal, transparent surface and said object is placed on said surface, wherein said sweep is arranged substantially vertically behind said object and extends below said horizontal glass surface of said support.

Claim 15 (original): The apparatus of Claim 14, wherein said sweep is a retro-reflective sheet covered with transparent spheres.

Claim 16 (original): The apparatus of Claim 15, wherein said spheres are glass spheres.

Claim 17 (currently amended): A method for producing a photograph of an object where said photograph contains only the object, said method comprising the steps of:

- a. providing a retro-reflective sweep behind said object;

- b. supporting said object on a transparent surface;
- c. taking a mask exposure, wherein said object and said sweep are illuminated by a light source during said mask exposure so that a sharp brightness contrast is obtained between said object and said sweep;
- d. using said sharp brightness contrast to define a background mask that is independent of color;
- e. using said background mask to strip said background from said photograph, based on said brightness contrast and not on color.

Claim 18 (original): The method according to Claim 17, wherein said light source is a strobe light synchronized with a shutter release mechanism of said camera.

Claim 19 (original): The method according to Claim 17, wherein said light source is constantly energized.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The method according to Claim 17 wherein said light source generates light ~~of providing light~~ of a particular color.

Claim 21 (new): The device of Claim 5, further comprising a translucent cover placed between said light source aperture and said light source.